Film-forming acrylic sealers create a visible, protective plastic-like layer on top of surfaces like concrete or pavers rather than soaking into the pores. You can identify them by a distinct surface sheen (matte to high-gloss), a "wet look" color enhancement, water beading completely on top, and a positive solvent test. YouTube · Deco-Crete TV +4

Visual and Physical Signs

- **Surface Sheen:** Shows a satin, low-gloss, or high-gloss finish that reflects light.
- **Color Enhancement:** Deepens and enriches the color of the underlying material, giving it a permanent "wet look".
- **Water Droplet Test:** Water beads up entirely on the surface and does not absorb into the material at all.
- **Peeling or Flaking:** May show signs of chipping, peeling, or wearing away in high-traffic paths over time (unlike penetrating sealers, which never peel). www.oceancarestore.com +3

The Xylene Solvent Test

To verify if an existing coating is an acrylic film-former (and whether it is solvent-based), perform a spot test using a small amount of xylene: Foundation Armor

- Apply a few drops or rub a xylene-dampened rag on a small, hidden section for 30 seconds.
- If the surface softens, becomes tacky, or liquefies, it is a solvent-based acrylic sealer.
- Water-based acrylics may soften slightly or resist mild xylene tests, but will typically show a breakdown in the topical film compared to deep epoxies or urethanes. Foundation Armor